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A WIDOW'S WILES

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

EMILIE H. CALLAWAY

Fitzgerald Publishing Corporation
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A WIDOW'S WILES.

CHARACTERS

MR. RAYMOND. . . . . A wealthy Virginian.
TOM RAYMOND. . . . . Mr. Raymond's son.
JACK FENTON. . . . . } Tom's friends.
WALTER TRASK . . . . . }
TED PRESCOTT. . . . . Tom's intimate chum.
PERCY HUSTON . . . . . A dude, given to "butting in"
SAMBO. . . . . Mr. Raymond's colored servant.
MRS. RAYMOND. . . . . Mr. Raymond's wife.
DORIS RAYMOND. . . . . Her daughter.
DAISY BURTON. . . . . Doris's friend.
MRS. BRONSON. . . . . A young scheming widow.
GRACE HUSTON. . . . . Percy Huston's sister.
MRS. PUEBLO. . . . . A society lady.
LOUISIANA FRANCIS. . . . . A young colored girl.
AUNT DINAH. . . . Mr. Raymond's colored old house-servant.

LOCALITY.—Acts I, and II.—A country residence in Virginia.

Act III.—A mansion in Washington.

TIME OF PERFORMANCE.—An hour and a half.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—House-party at the RAYMONDS' country-house in Virginia. Arrival of MR. PRESCOTT, the celebrity, in love with DORIS. DORIS'S ideal hero. MRS. BRONSON plans to capture TOM and his millions. The counter-plot.

ACT II. Drawing-room in the same house, a week later. The progress of the counter-plot; TED PRESCOTT'S self-sacrifice. MRS. BRONSON falls into the trap. TOM accuses TED, his chum, of treachery. TED'S dilemma; the widow's artful confession, and her triumphant marriage to TED.

ACT III.—Drawing-room in the RAYMONDS' town residence, three years later. Death of MRS. PRESCOTT. TED'S return, he is scornfully repulsed by DORIS who believes him false. TOM is still bitter against TED. JACK explains to TOM how he has been saved from a life of misery by TED'S heroic sacrifice; their conversation is overheard by DORIS. Reconciliation, and DORIS rewards her hero.

COSTUMES

ACT I.—DAISY BURTON, JACK FENTON, and WALTER TRASK in golf costume. TED PRESCOTT at first in travelling clothes; later, in afternoon house-suit. MR. RAYMOND, at entrance, in driving-rig, afterwards in home dress. The others are in suitable house-costume.

ACT II.—All are in evening dress.

ACT III.—GRACE HUSTON, MRS. PUEBLO, and TED PRESCOTT in costumes suitable for afternoon calls. DORIS, in house reception dress. PERCY, extravagantly stylish get up.

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES

Embroidery for MRS. RAYMOND. Broom, teapot, water-carafe, tray and glasses for DINAH. Bunch of red roses, dress-suit case for SAMBO. Feather-duster for LOUISIANA. Watch and charm, bunch of violets for GRACE. Watch and roll of manuscript for JACK. Photograph of DORIS on table in Act III. Sprig of apple-blossoms for DAISY.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

As viewed by a performer on the stage, facing the audience, R., means right-hand; L., left-hand; C., centre of stage; C. D., door in centre of rear flat, UP, toward rear of stage; DOWN, toward the footlights.

A WIDOW'S WILES.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The library in the* RAYMONDS' *country-house in Virginia. Door in centre of flat with portières marking the entrance. Door at* R., *of stage; another door at* L. *Window* L. *of* C. D. *Chairs at* R. *and* L. *of* C. D. *Table at* L. *front, behind it and a little toward* R., *is a Morris-chair. Piano up* R. *A lounge at* R. C. *Pictures hung on wall* R. *of* C. D. *The general arrangement of the room is suggestive of refinement and luxurious taste.*

DISCOVERED, MRS. RAYMOND *seated at table quietly humming to herself as she works at embroidery.*

ENTER DORIS, *through the portières at* C. D.

DORIS (*looking around as she enters*). Oh, dearie me! Hasn't Father got back yet? (*Walks around toward the lounge*)

MRS. RAYMOND (*looking up at* DORIS). Is he not anywhere around the house?

DORIS (*in a masterful manner*). No, dear. I sent him to town. You see I wanted the table to look *very* extra to-night, so he went to town to get some of that new kind of roses.

MRS. RAYMOND. Dear little girl! How much pains you *do* take. Tom is so fond of his little sister.

DORIS. House-parties *are* a responsibility. Do you realize, Mother Raymond, that you and I haven't had a single chance to discuss Tom's friends since they arrived?

MRS. RAYMOND. Doris, how you talk!

DORIS. Well, dear, you know, just between ourselves, we *do* like to talk about people—just to decide whether we like them or not. We do, don't we?

MRS. RAYMOND. Doris, it seems to me you are beginning to grow up.

DORIS. Oh, not a bit. Here's Tom grown up and through college—so I have to stay ungrown up for both of us.

MRS. RAYMOND. If I could only keep you both my little child-

ren always! But you have to grow up—it's right you should—only Tom seems—he seems to have grown away from me lately.

DORIS (*kneeling beside her mother*). Don't say that, dear. It's only that he's so busy entertaining his house-party—and—and—that woman seems to have somehow fascinated him. (DORIS *turns her head away.*)

MRS. RAYMOND. Doris, you mustn't speak of Tom's friends that way. Mrs. Bronson just seems—well, different from the rest of us. But, of course, she must be very nice or Tom wouldn't like her.

DORIS. Maybe its just her way—but—well, I don't like her.

ENTER MR. RAYMOND, R., *followed by* SAMBO *with a basket of roses.*

DORIS (*excitedly*). Oh, Father! Did you get them?

MR. RAYMOND (*holding her off, teasingly*). Such excitement.

DORIS (*rushes past him and examines the roses.* SAMBO *grins*). Oh, Father, they're lovely!

MR. RAYMOND. Don't you try to tell your old dad it's all on account of brother Tom that we want the table so beautiful to-night. [EXIT SAMBO, R.

DORIS. Father, stop!

MR. RAYMOND (*teasingly*). Oh, yes, ordinary roses will do for the rest of the house-party, but when a certain gentleman arrives this afternoon——

DORIS. Father, I think you might stop. Just because I *do* like celebrities and heroes and grand men who have *done* things—then father has to—well, I do like Mr. Prescott, and I think it's awfully nice of him to come to our house-party, and I'm proud indeed to have such a grand man so fond of my brother.

MRS. RAYMOND. How could he help being fond of Tom? Dear boy.

(MR. RAYMOND *crosses and leans over* MRS. RAYMOND'S *chair.*)

MR. RAYMOND. Well, Mother, we'll have to let Doris have her own way, as usual, won't we, and go on with her hero-worship. We're getting behind the times, you and I.

MRS. RAYMOND (*playfully*). Speak for yourself, Father.

MR. RAYMOND. That's what you told me once—many years ago. (*To* DORIS). Birdie, your mother was a sad coquette in those days, and many a fellow lost——

MRS. RAYMOND (*interrupting*). Father, what nonsense you talk.

DORIS. She liked grand men who did things, too, didn't she, Father?

MR. RAYMOND. Trying to jolly your old dad again! Better behave yourself, young lady, here come some of our guests.

ENTER DAISY BURTON, JACK FENTON *and* WALTER TRASK, R.
They are dressed in golfing costume.

DAISY BURTON. Such glorious golfing! You certainly have corking grounds, Mr. Raymond. For the mistress of the manor. (*She playfully gives* MRS. RAYMOND *some apple blossoms she's been carrying—then goes over and sits on lounge*). You ought to have come, Doris.

MR. RAYMOND. Glad you like my grounds, Miss Daisy. Mother calls them my hobby.

JACK FENTON. We've been trying to get in some heavy work before the celebrity gets here. Expect after old Ted comes, the ladies won't ever golf any more with poor ordinary mortals. Isn't that so, Walter?

WALTER TRASK. Never wanted to be a celebrity so badly in all my life.

DAISY. We, on the contrary, expect celebrity to be so wrapped up in Tom, that he won't even speak to us. He and Tom are terribly good friends, aren't they, Mrs. Raymond?

MRS. RAYMOND. There seems to be a very warm friendship between them. Mr. Prescott has the elder brother attitude towards Tom. Calms him down, you know.

WALTER. Ted Prescott is certainly young to be in the House of Representatives.

JACK. But Ted's got brains enough to pull him even through politics.

DAISY. Oh, Mrs. Raymond, now is an awfully good time to tell us about the story of *your* career in politics.

MRS. RAYMOND (*getting up hastily*). Dear children, tell you stories with a new cook in the kitchen! Never, never. I expect she and Aunt Dinah are quarrelling this very minute. (*Starts out*).

JACK. I say, Mrs. Raymond, tell her to give us some more of those biscuits for dinner.

DAISY. Oh yes, do!

MRS. RAYMOND (*smiling*). I'll see what can be done about it. [EXIT, C. D.

MR. RAYMOND (*following her*). I guess I'll have to take a look after those biscuits myself. [EXIT, C. D.

DAISY (*to* DORIS). I don't know which one I'm most in love with, your father or your mother.

WALTER (*teasingly*). Or your brother.

DAISY. I don't get much chance to show my feelings in that direction.

(*There is an awkward silence.*)

DORIS (*hastily*). Oh, Walter, I want to show you that picture of Tom. I found it in the music room, after all.

WALTER. No time like the present. See you later, people.
[EXIT WALTER *and* DORIS, L.

(DAISY *continues sitting on the lounge.* JACK *strolls around.*)

DAISY. Rather awkward remark of mine, wasn't it?

JACK. Do you really think it was? I rather think your aversion to Mrs. Bronson makes you think every one else feels the same way.

DAISY. It's the way she appropriates the men—I suppose you think that's why I don't like her. You men are so—well, you think you're just a little important, don't you?

JACK. It depends on circumstances—(*Looks out of the window*) Mrs. Bronson at present, is walking up the drive with young Huston. Tom, on the other hand, looking far from important, listens to one of Miss Huston's rhapsodies—She must be discussing Titian, judging from old Tom's face.

DAISY. Mrs. Bronson plays her cards well. How much money do you suppose Tom will be worth when old Mr. Eliot dies?

JACK. A few millions, I imagine. See here, Daisy, you women seem to get on to this sort of thing. Do you think Mrs. Bronson will marry Tom?

DAISY. Just as fast as Tom asks her. I shouldn't be surprised if they were engaged already. Low lights, violets, a languid air, a clinging gown—a boy like Tom—and it's all over. I rather imagine Mrs. Bronson is right up on that sort of thing.

JACK. You women *do* see things.

DAISY. I suppose you think I'm a horrid spiteful thing. Well, you see, Jack, I've known you such ages that it isn't of the slightest importance what I say to you.

JACK. Deliver me from the privileges of an old friend!

DAISY. I shall continue to tell you just what I think, nevertheless. You men can all fall down and worship Mrs. Bronson if you like. *I* can't endure her. (*Walks across the room*)

JACK. Well, we'll have to get Ted's opinion about the lady. I wish the old fellow would put in an appearance.

DAISY. Mr. Prescott, I suppose you mean—your celebrated friend!

JACK. My celebrated friend.

DAISY. A man has just to be a celebrity and the world is his. As to his personal character—he can do just anything on earth he wants to and it's all right—he is a celebrity.

JACK. Is there any one of whom you *do* approve, might one ask?

DAISY. Oh, very few. And do not flatter yourself, my dear Mr. Fenton, that you are among them. Good-bye, Jacky.
[EXIT, L.

JACK. Daisy's an old dear, in spite of her tongue. Only hope

she's not really crazy about Tom. There can't be any mistake about Mrs. Bronson. Daisy feels it too. She's got Tom just where she wants him. Ted will have to straighten things out—I've done my best. We can't let Tom get in that woman's clutches.

ENTER MRS. BRONSON, PERCY HUSTON, GRACE HUSTON *and* TOM RAYMOND, C. D.

MRS. BRONSON. Here's our pensive friend. How sad and sombre you do look, Mr. Fenton. Won't you tell us—all about it? We poor, ignorant populace.

JACK. I'm afraid the populace might not exactly care for them.

MRS. BRONSON. Dear me, how cross you are.

(*Sinks on couch.* PERCY *leans over her.* TOM *keeps rather near.* GRACE *and* JACK *talk together.*)

TOM. Ted hasn't come yet?

JACK. No, your sister said they expected him soon.

GRACE. Oh, the celebrity.

MRS. BRONSON (*leaning forward*). I'm so anxious to meet your friend, Tommie.

JACK (*aside*). Tommie!

MRS. BRONSON. Men who have achieved! They are the men who know what life is.

PERCY (*in a low voice*). Oh, if we could have your smile to reward us—we—I could do anything.

MRS. BRONSON (*laughing*). What charming things you do say, Mr. Huston. But you really mustn't say such wicked things to a staid widow, you know.

PERCY. Do you really think me a wicked fellow?

MRS. BRONSON (*laughing*). Oh, dear me, yes, I'm really afraid of you.

PERCY. Aw, now, I say.

TOM. A moonlight drive! Just the thing. Ted will enjoy it.

GRACE. How delightful! To have our souls thrilled by the beauties of the night. The moonlight awakens all the faculties of appreciation we have. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Fenton?

JACK. The moonlight never makes me feel *that* way.

PERCY. Aw, I say, Grace, I feel just the same way you do about it.

GRACE. Oh, you men can laugh if you like. You haven't any artistic appreciation, any of you. Have they, Mr. Raymond?

TOM. Not an artistic shred hanging to them anywhere.

GRACE. Let's try to educate them. What fun it *will* be to-night.

TOM (*crossing to* MRS. BRONSON). Will you go on the box seat with me to-night?

MRS. BRONSON (*indifferently*). If I'm not too tired.

PERCY. Aw, say, Tom, you're always getting in ahead of a fellow.

MRS. BRONSON. Tom is awfully precipitate, isn't he?

GRACE. Mr. Raymond, when does Mr. Prescott get here. I'm sure he'll know *all* about Douget's new picture that's just been hung in Washington.

TOM. My dear Miss Huston. Ted can't tell a Botticelli from a Christy picture. His forte is men—and women.

MRS. BRONSON. The celebrity again! I always heard he couldn't endure women. How's that?

JACK. They all fall down and worship, as it were. And Ted comes out, none the worse for wear.

MRS. BRONSON. Wonderful man!

GRACE. I've heard *so* much about him. I'm *wild* to see him.

TOM (*at the window*). There he is now—just driven up with Father. You'll excuse me? [EXIT *quickly*, C. D.

JACK. I must see the old chap.

[EXIT JACK, C. D., *followed by* GRACE.

(MRS. BRONSON *with a slight shrug of the shoulders strolls over to the piano, and plays lightly.* PERCY *follows, and leans over the corner.*)

PERCY. Aw, I say, Mrs. Bronson, your hair is deucedly lovely in this light.

MRS. BRONSON. Silly boy. Run along and leave me to my meditations.

PERCY. You're not really afraid of me?

MRS. BRONSON. Oh, yes—I am. Please go—I want to think. (*Rather impatiently*)

PERCY. Dare I hope—about *me*. Ah, see how quickly I go. (*Aside*) I'm getting to be a devil of a fellow. [EXIT, C. D.

MRS. BRONSON. Little fool! But he serves his purpose. Dear Tom is certainly green with jealousy. I must bring him to the point to-night.

(*Laughing and talking is heard outside.*)

ENTER TED PRESCOTT *and* TOM, *followed by* JACK *and* SAMBO *carrying suit-case.* SAMBO *puts it down and stands at rear of stage.*

TOM. Well, I never was so glad to see any one in all my life—old boy. Ah, Ted, I want to present you to Mrs. Bronson, my friend, Mr. Prescott.

MRS. BRONSON (*holding out her hand*). I'm *so* glad to know you, Mr. Prescott. Needless to say, I've heard many things about you.

TED. See here, Tommie, what have you been saying about me? (*To* MRS. BRONSON) You see Tom has always had a grudge against me.

TOM. One, old man? Make it a dozen.

MRS. BRONSON. Yes, he's really said some pretty—pretty dreadful things about you. I'll tell you about them at some more convenient season.

TED. No time like the present, you know—

MRS. BRONSON. Ah, but you see I know you men are yearning for a good old gossip. I hope to see you at dinner, Mr. Prescott, and then I shall tell you many things. [EXIT, C. D.

TED. What did you say the lady's name was, Tom?

TOM. Mrs Bronson. Her husband died a few months after her marriage.

TED. It seems as if I'd seen her before. Are all the rest of the house-party as attractive?

JACK. See here, how long since you've been going in for the heavy society act?

TED. My dear fellow, I assure you I'm a social butterfly. Say, Tom, might I suggest I'd like to tidy up a bit, before I meet your mother and—sister?

TOM. Pardon me. I completely forgot you'd travelled several miles. Here, Sam, bring along his duds. Come on, Jack, we'll all go up. Can't leave you out of our sight, Ted.

[EXIT ALL, R.

ENTER AUNT DINAH *and* LOUISIANA, L. AUNT DINAH *begins to dust—the child watches her.*

AUNT DINAH. Bless me, chile, I taught dhey'd never git through a-talkin—do' I's mighty fond ob Mass Prescott—he's sure 'nough quality. But, look at dis here dirt, I declare dar's 'nough dirt here to plant potatoes in. Chile—what for are you a-standin' thar? Did ye think I fetched ye to a matinee—why ain't ye a tidyin' up this yer place. Ye ain't got no sense in yer black head, hab ye?

(*The* CHILD *starts to work, but stops as soon as* DINAH'S *back is turned.*)

DINAH. Miss Doris, she's sure 'nough glad when Mass Prescott come. Ye good-fer-nothin' niggah, I ain't aguine tell ye agin to stop lookin' at me. Ain't ye never seen no good-lookin' colored ladies before? I ain't guine to talk no more. (*She ejects the child* L.)

ENTER DORIS *and* DAISY, C. D.

DAISY. Isn't Mr. Huston killing? He does think he's so wicked, good little soul.

U. OF ILL. LIB.

DORIS. Dinah, you may go. [EXIT DINAH, L.

DAISY. Your southern darkies are so refreshing. Did I tell you we are thinking of coming to live in Virginia?

DORIS. Honestly? How perfectly splendid.

DAISY. Would you really like it? Do you know I think we could get to be awfully good friends if we had a chance. I feel as if I'd known you for years, in just this little time.

DORIS. I do hope we may have a chance. I've been with mother so much, I don't seem to have any really true girl friends. Of course I know lots, but I don't call any of them friends.

DAISY. Dear me, you talk just like a college girl.

DORIS. People do laugh at my ideas, I know. But I have some very big ones about friendship. I think friendship is a very sacred thing and it ought to mean a lot to both parties, I think it brings obligations and responsibilities—just as love does.

DAISY. You certainly are different from all the society girls I know. To them a friend is someone to whom to tell all the nice things Jack said, and to discuss all the other girls' clothes with. A really responsible relationship, you see.

DORIS. Sometimes, I think perhaps girls aren't capable of such big, disinterested friendships as men are. For instance, there's Tom and Mr. Prescott. They'd do anything on earth for each other, and wouldn't think anything more about it than if they had done it for themselves.

DAISY. Wait till a woman comes between.

DORIS. A woman could never come between. You don't know what Mr. Prescott is. He's a celebrity of course, but he's a noble man beside. He has ideals and he lives up to them. He never thinks of himself. There's nothing little or mean about him. He's just a grand, big—

ENTER TED, C. D., DAISY *sees him.*

DAISY (*aside*). Not dressed yet. [EXIT, L.

(DORIS *turns hastily, sees* TED *and is much confused.*)

TED (*taking both of her hands*). Well, Miss Doris, it has been a long while, hasn't it? Might I ask whom you were praising so delightfully?

DORIS. A—a hero of mine.

TED. Lucky hero. Won't you tell me the requirements. You know, I've always wanted to be a hero.

DORIS (*hastily*). I—I'm afraid there won't be time before dinner. I must dress.

TED. So many requirements? I'm devoured with curiosity.

DORIS (*trying to change the subject*). How awfully well you're looking. It's two years since I saw—since you were here, isn't it?

TED. Two long years, Miss Doris. Seems to me I remember a Christmas party and some mistletoe. I thought I might take a grandfather's privileges, but you evidently didn't agree with me.

DORIS. Mr. Prescott, what embarrassing subjects you insist on talking about. I really must dress for dinner.

TED. Oh, but before you go—aren't you going to tell me about this hero of yours?

DORIS. Would you really like to know about him?

TED. You've no idea how much.

DORIS (*slowly puts her hands behind her. She stands thinking for a moment*), Well—

> "He must be courteous toward the lowly,
> To the weak and sorrowful, loving too.
> He must be courageous, refined and holy,
> By nature exalted and firm and true."

Oh, he's everything that's—nice.

TED. I only hope you may meet him, Miss Doris. But ideals, I'm afraid, are not much given to prowling about in the flesh.

DORIS. I'm sure of mine.

TED. What—what physical attributes is he going to have.

DORIS (*glancing playfully at* TED, *who looks straight ahead of him*). Well, he must be just about my height—not an awfully big man. (TED *is large.*) I imagine he'll have brown eyes. (TED'S *are blue.*) His hair must be light and curl up on his forehead. (TED S *is dark and straight.*)

TED. Can you recommend any tonic for hair-curling.

DORIS. Yes, indeed. (*Archly*) If you eat bread-crusts—loads and loads—you can accomplish wonders.

TED. Well, then we can fix the curls. But, how about height? Didn't Alice in Wonderland have some patent on shrinkage?

DORIS. But you see your eyes are impossible. You'll never do—no, never.

TED (*leaning forward*). Miss Doris, if I ever attain the other requirements, the inner ones, I mean, couldn't you over look the eyes?

DORIS (*hastily.*) I *must* dress for dinner. Do make yourself at home. TOM will be here directly. [EXIT, C. D.

TED (*gazing after her*). Dear little girl!

ENTER JACK, L.

JACK. Hello, Ted! I've been wanting to see you alone ever since you came into the house.

TED. What's the matter?

JACK. A woman's the matter.

TED (*hastily*). Doris?

JACK. No, man ; it's Tom that's the trouble.
TED. How long since Tom has been a woman ?
JACK. See here, Ted, no joking, this is serious business.

ENTER AUNT DINAH, L., *with water*. *Puts it on table*, L.

TED. How do you do, Aunt Dinah ? *We* don't have anything to trouble *us*, do we ?
AUNT DINAH. Thank you, Sah, much obliged, Sah ; thank you Sah— [EXIT, L.
TED. Have a smoke, Jack. You'll feel easier in your mind.
JACK. You remember meeting Mrs. Bronson ?
TED. Remarkably fine-looking, I thought——
JACK. Remarkably nothing ! Think,—have you ever seen her before ?
TED. She has been toying with your young affections, evidently.
JACK. I'm older than Tom, remember that. Tell me if you have ever seen her before.
TED. Her face was familiar, but I've no idea *where* I've seen her—New York ? London ? Paris ? I believe it was in Paris.
JACK. Just so. In Paris, four years ago. Mrs. Louton at that time.
TED. You don't mean that woman ?
JACK. Ah, you remember her ? She was having a gay time in Paris ? Young Bronson was hanging around—a nice young chap too. You remember her manœuvres ? He had money, so he was her game. He died a few months after the marriage, luckily for him.
TED. What is that woman doing here ?
JACK. Tom and his millions. He's young and easy, and Mrs. Bronson has him just where she wants him. They'll be married and it's all up with Tom and his life.
TED. You are absolutely certain of this ?
JACK. Sure as I am sitting here. I knew her the moment I laid eyes on her. Of course she doesn't know we've ever seen or heard of her before.
TED. Tom must be told the whole wretched story at once.
JACK. Told ! My dear fellow, Tom's beyond that. I've told him everything, talked till I was black and blue in the face. How much effect does it have on Tom ? He said she had already told him everything—he doesn't care what her life has been. She loves him—he will make up to her for the way the world has treated her —and all that sort of thing. The boy is infatuated—clean gone.
TED. If it has gone as far as that, talking will do no good.
JACK. If Tom *does* marry her, the harm isn't going to end there. When Mrs. Raymond realizes that Mrs. Bronson cares for nothing but money—and that Tom is tied to a woman like that—for better,

for worse—I really think it will kill her. And as for Doris—well, you know yourself, how wrapped up they are in Tom.

TED. Yes.

JACK. I've had time to think about this thing and I've thought of a way to stop it. It's the only way I can think of. A man would have to care a lot for old Tom to do it. There are few men *could* do it. I think *you* could.

TED. What do you mean?

JACK. Do you remember that thing of Browning's we had in college? I remember the lines.

> "And before my friend be wholly hers,
> How easy to prove to him, I said,
> An eagle's the game her pride prefers,
> Though she snaps at a wren instead."

You see what my scheme is?

TED. You mean you want *me* deliberately to try to win this woman?

JACK. Just that. Remember you're a big catch. She'll throw Tom over, all right. That will prove to Tom what she is after—and it will effectually prove it.

TED. What of *her?* Remember "its an awkward thing to play with souls."

JACK. Soul—in connection with *her!* But it certainly *is* a hard thing to ask a man to do—you must use all your diplomacy and not go too far. Just far enough for her to throw Tom over.

TED. It's a mean trick to play on any woman.

JACK. Well, it's a choice between her and Tom.

TED. Great Scott, man, do you realize what this thing is you're so calmly planning? But—I—I can't let the boy go that way!

JACK. I think it's more than that, Ted. It is you and the woman on one hand. It's Tom and Mrs. Raymond and Doris on the other. It's this whole family. You must think of the rest.

TED (*slowly*). Yes, of the rest.

ENTER MRS. BRONSON, *at* C. D., *followed by* TOM.

MRS. BRONSON. Oh, pardon us. We didn't mean to interrupt this solemn conclave. [EXIT *laughingly with* TOM.

TED (*slowly*). I'll try it, Jack.

(*They clasp right hands.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Drawing-room in the* RAYMONDS' *country-house, one week later. Some moments before the curtain rises, music is heard off stage and voices singing a Negro song. When the song is nearly finished, the curtain is raised,* DISCOVERING TED *and* MRS. BRONSON *seated on a sofa* R. C. PERCY *and* GRACE *are seated* UP R. *of* C. TOM *is just in front of them, looking sulky.* DORIS, JACK, DAISY *and* PERCY *sitting in a group* L. DORIS *is covertly watching* MRS. BRONSON. WALTER *and* MRS. PUEBLO *stroll in at* R. *as the song ends.* ALL *applaud.*

MRS. BRONSON. Isn't that charming. Do get them to sing some more.

PERCY, JACK *and* WALTER (*in college chorus style*). We want some more. We want some more.

TOM (*walks* R.) We'll see what can be done. (*Signals off* R. *Singing is repeated.* ALL *stroll around until song is finished*)

ENTER MRS. RAYMOND, C. D.

MRS. RAYMOND. Doris, some other guests are arriving. (*To* ALL) It's so beautiful to-night, we'll have some dancing out on the piazza. I thought you might enjoy it that way.

(*Dance music is heard off* R. *softly as if at some distance and continues at intervals during the entire act.*)

PERCY (*coming toward* MRS. BRONSON). A dance! Aw, I say, it's my turn, don't you think?

[MRS. RAYMOND, DORIS *and* JACK EXIT, C. D.

[WALTER, GRACE *and* MRS. PUEBLO, EXIT, R.

TED. (*offering* MRS. BRONSON, *his arm. To* PERCY). Foiled again. Mrs. Bronson is engaged to me—to trip the light fantastic. You'll have to hustle there, Percy, my boy.

MRS. BRONSON (*holding out her hand to* PERCY). I'll save you a dance, reserved for you exclusively. Tom has the next one or I'd give you that.

[EXIT MRS. BRONSON *and* TED, R., *laughing and talking.*

DAISY. I'm so sorry your head aches, Tom. Can't I do anything?

TOM. Nothing, thanks. I'll just have a smoke.

PERCY (*standing at* C. D.). Aw, I say, Miss Daisy, my head aches awfully too, don't cher know. I need attention very badly. (*To* TOM, *trying to be jovial*) I say, Tom, Mrs. Bronson's thrown us both down. Cheer up, old man, there are plenty more pretty girls.

(TOM *winces and turns.* DAISY *glances quickly at* TOM.)

DAISY (*to* PERCY, *hurriedly*). Come, Mr. Huston, I'll see what can be done for you.

[*She glances back at* TOM. EXIT, C. D.

PERCY. Deucedly clever girl. [EXIT, C. D.

(TOM *throws himself on the lounge, his hands deep in his pockets. Frowns. Then throws away his cigarette and puts his head on his hands.*)

ENTER DORIS, C. D. *Sees* TOM, *runs to him, kneels beside him, and tries to put her arm around his neck.*

DORIS. Tommie, dear, don't. She—she isn't worth it. (*She waits a minute*) Tom, speak to me. Besides she—she may just be fooling with—Mr. Prescott. (*Trying to comfort him*) If you really care so much—she may care too.

(TOM *rises hastily. Walks across the room, throwing back his shoulders.*)

TOM. I shall find that out soon.

(DORIS *continues sitting on the floor, gazing at* TOM.)

DORIS. Even if it is earnest, Tom—it—she—do you think she's worth it all?

TOM (*fiercely*). Worth it? You don't know what you're talking about. Worth it? Good heavens! What's that got to do with it? (*In a changed tone*) And that it should be Ted!

DORIS (*getting up*). Yes, he's turned out—differently from I—we expected.

(*She walks across front of stage* L. TOM *looks at her a moment. Then crosses quickly and takes her in his arms.*)

TOM. It's pretty tough, dear, all round. (*Laughing heard outside*)

ENTER MRS. BRONSON *and* TED, C.

MRS. BRONSON. No, this is really Tommie's dance. Well, Tommie, do you think it's good form to make me come after you? I do believe you had forgotten.

TOM (*gravely*). I had not forgotten.

(DORIS *crosses quickly to* R.)

TED. Miss Doris, may I——

DORIS (*hastily*). I have to see mother, please excuse me.
[EXIT, R.

(TED *looks after her and then* EXITS, R.)

(MRS. BRONSON *sinks on lounge* L. TOM *stands in front of her.*)

TOM (*in a low and intense tone*). You know this cannot go on this way another minute. You must decide between us—Ted and me.

MRS. BRONSON. Dear boy, don't look so tragic.

TOM. Tragic? Yes, look at me. You think I'm a boy, don't you? You think you can toy and play with me and then throw me away when you're tired. You can't do it. Do you hear me? *You can't do it.* You promised to be my wife. (MRS. BRONSON *rises.* TOM *looks at her a moment and then seizes her hand passionately*) Helen, you can't trample on my love.

MRS. BRONSON (*quickly*). Tom, dear, I—I cannot bear to hurt you, but—when I promised to marry you, Tom, I thought it was love. But since then, a greater love has come into my life. (TOM *drops her hands and turns away abruptly*) I couldn't help it, could I, dear? I struggled against it, but it came and swept me off my feet. I can't marry you, loving another one more. You wouldn't have me, would you? (*Pleadingly*) I'm trying to be honest with you, Tom.

TOM. Honest with me! Damnation.

MRS. BRONSON. Tom, you forget yourself.

TOM. Forget myself! Good Lord, if I could.

MRS. BRONSON (*laying her hand on his arm*). Tom, dear, if you know how this hurts, how sorry—sorry I am.

TOM (*turns quickly and takes her in his arms*). Helen, this can't be final, it can't be all over—I—I cannot let you go.

MRS. BRONSON. It wouldn't be right to let you go on waiting. Ted—

TOM (*almost flings her from him*). Curse him! (*Walks quickly to* R. *Turns and looks at her. Her back is turned, he starts toward her, then turns*) [EXIT *quickly*, R.

MRS. BRONSON (*sinks on couch*). Such scenes are rather exhausting. Enough of boys. But I must make sure of the other. Suppose I should love them both. (*Smiles complacently*) I guess there's no danger. I really hadn't intended dropping Tom and his millions quite so soon, but dear me, what could I do?

ENTER DAISY *and* JACK, C. D.

DAISY. Here's Mrs. Bronson. What have you done with your swains?

MRS. BRONSON. What do *you* do with them, Miss Burton? You manage dances so skilfully, I do envy you.

DAISY. Just say, "Go to, i' faith," and dance with the one I like the best.

JACK. And this is my dance! Daisy, you'd better take it back.

DAISY. You know perfectly well you don't count, Jack—not the least bit.

MRS. BRONSON. Miss Burton, you're so refreshing. But suppose, you can't decide which one you like the best—there have been such cases, you know.

DAISY. Just say, "My mother told me, to take this one," and always obey your mother. It's really very simple when you have reduced it to a science.

ENTER TED, R.

TED. You, given to sciences, Miss Daisy? (*He leans over* MRS. BRONSON'S *sofa*)

DAISY. You, a member of the Honorable House of Representatives, given to eavesdropping? Would you have thought it, Mrs. Bronson?

TED. Shocking bad form, I admit. Being in the House brings frightful responsibilities. Speaking of responsibilities, Mrs. Bronson, I'm sent to conduct you to the scene of the night-blooming cereus.

MRS. BRONSON (*rises, laughing*). Another frightful responsibility. (*They start to* C.) Since Miss Burton's conversation with you doesn't count, Mr. Fenton, you had both better come and see the plant too. [EXIT MRS. BRONSON *and* TED, C.

DAISY. Do you know, Jack, I'm beginning to like Mrs. Bronson. Even if she has treated Tom so.

JACK. Why, might I ask?

DAISY. I like the way she does things better. And I think there's no fooling this time. I think she's honestly fathoms deep in love with Ted Prescott. She's grown so quiet, and have you noticed the way she looks at him, when he isn't looking?

JACK. Great Scott! Do you really think that?

DAISY. Why, what's the matter with that? He is evidently just crazy about her. I didn't think she was capable of a shred of love, but I begin to think I've misjudged her.

JACK. Ha, a pretty mess!

DAISY. Pretty mess? What are you talking about? I thought you were the person who stood up so terribly for Mrs. Bronson.

JACK. Do you really think she is in love with him?

ENTER DORIS, C.

DORIS. Oh, here you are, Daisy. (*They stand with arms around each other*)

DAISY. Doris, you have got to stop doing so much. Let us entertain ourselves. You look so white and tired, dear.

DORIS. Nonsense, I'm all right. Have you seen the plant?

DAISY. No, Mrs. Bronson was just telling us to come up.

DORIS. You had better hurry. Father has it closed up at ten.

DAISY. Oh, I *do* want to see it. [EXIT, C. D.

DORIS (*drops into chair*). Jack, if you want to be amused, you had better go with her. I'm too tired to be agreeable.

JACK. Won't you let me stay with you, Doris?

DORIS. Oh, yes, you may stay if you want to.

JACK. Doris, we used to be such good friends. Somehow, lately, our friendship—

DORIS. Friendship! There's no such thing as friendship. (JACK *starts*) No, of course, I don't mean that, but—people—yes, I guess I do.

JACK. What—in thunder—have I done?

DORIS. You! *You* haven't done anything—I—I'm just generalizing.

JACK. People don't generalize without some provocation——

DORIS. I—I wonder if there are any really great men now-a-days.

JACK. I think there are a few. Doris, if you'd only give an ordinary fellow a chance, some hope of reward——

DORIS. Let's not discuss it, please. That is not the kind of greatness I mean—the kind that wants a reward. It is the kind that goes on and on and never says anything. But I'm learning that there are not many people who come at all near to be ideals.

JACK. Doris, why are you always after ideals—I imagine they'd be pretty uncomfortable to live with.

DORIS, I didn't always think my ideals were so rare. But listen, Jack. I want your advice—that is—well, listen.

JACK. I'm all attention.

DORIS. Suppose you were in love with somebody——

JACK (*aside*). That's straight goods.

DORIS. Who you thought was all that was big and noble and true, and then you found out that he—she—wasn't what you'd thought after all. Ah—ah, you ought to stop loving, oughtn't you?

JACK. Why, I don't know that you could unlove all at once.

DORIS (*walks to one side. Aside*). Oh, no, you can't.

ENTER TED, C. D.

JACK. Hello, Ted.

(DORIS *starts, then* EXITS *quickly* R.)

JACK. Something's wrong with Doris.

TED. Jack, this is a costly business.

JACK. You're doing it up brown. She's thrown Tom over as nicely as possible. You've got more tact, Ted——

TED. Tact? What's tact got to do with business like this? Jack, I'm afraid it's getting serious. I nearly chucked up the whole thing last night—I found I had gone a little farther than I meant. Then I happened to see Tom—and I kept on.

JACK. Well, you can chuck it up pretty soon—as soon as Tom's safe. The joke of the thing is, the lady's really falling in love with you.

TED. Joke?

JACK. Well, call it tragedy then. Daisy Burton has noticed it; with a woman's intuition. She says it's the real thing now and no counterfeit. Ha, you're going to end by reforming her.

TED. Look here, man, this may be a joking matter for *you*, but remember it's not for *me*—nor for *her*. I've noticed things myself. Of course, I thought it was acting—till lately,

(*Music heard again off* R.)

JACK. You'd better do the light aside before you get in it yourself.

TED. In it myself? Jack—if—if I've honestly made that woman care for me?—Great Heavens, what would a man, with any sense of honor, do?

JACK. Ted, you don't mean to marry her yourself!

ENTER MR. RAYMOND, DAISY *and* GRACE, C. D. *The negroes follow with the musicians playing a Reel.*

MR. RAYMOND. Come on, young gentlemen, the ladies want an old-style Virginia reel. That's right, fly round now. Come on, Miss Grace, you and I'll lead. Hurry up there, Ted, there's Mrs. Bronson.

ENTER MRS. RAYMOND, MRS. BRONSON *and* PERCY.

(*There is much laughter. They dance a short Reel.* TED *tries to be light,* JACK *looks pretty worried.*)

MRS. RAYMOND. Father, we haven't danced so much in years.

MR. RAYMOND. And such pigeon-wings as we used to cut. You young fellows aren't half so spry as we used to be.

PERCY. And, I say, Mr. Raymond, I'll challenge you to a race, a moonlight race across the lawn.

MR. RAYMOND. I'll take you up—and beat you—Miss Grace, you shall judge.

GRACE (*taking a bunch of violets from her dress*). For the winner!

MR. RAYMOND. Come on, all of you. You all can be the jury. [EXIT *all with much laughter.*

(*As* DAISY *and* MRS. BRONSON *are going,* TED *being still in the room,* TOM *enters* L.)

TOM (*to* TED). I would like to speak to you a moment.

(MRS. BRONSON *and* DAISY *look apprehensively at both men.*) [EXIT BOTH, C. D.

TOM. I want to tell you that, under the circumstances, it will be impossible for me to go to Washington with you, as we had planned.

TED. This is as good a time and place as any. I may as well explain things.

TOM. Explain?

TED. Tom, I know how you feel. You're sore all over—especially against *me.* Listen, Tom, I did this thing deliberately and with a purpose. It seemed the only way to save you from her. She wasn't the right sort for *you,* Tom, and this showed her up pretty clearly. It may be tough, man, but you see now it was only your money she was after.

Tom (*fiercely*). Do you expect me to believe that rot? You're mad with love for her—mad. Do you mean to tell me you've no intention of marrying her? (TED *starts*) Ah, you acknowledge it! Cut out your damned excuses.

TED. See here, you're supposed to be a man, with a man's judgment and common sense.

TOM. It's a wonder I'm anything. The woman I loved more than anything on this earth—do you hear—and you—you—who I'd thought was the best friend I had—to come between—deliberately to cut me out in my own house.

TED. Do you mean to tell me you doubt my word?

TOM. Doubt? Every word you say is a lie, you're trying to crawl. To save me. (*Laughs hysterically*) Good-bye, my friend. (*Starts toward* L.)

TED. If I were a boy, I might indulge in a little passion too. If you imagine for an instant I'm doing this thing for the love of it —See here, we're not a couple of schoolboys, we are supposed to be friends. Where's your faith, trust?

TOM. Faith! Trust! Rubbish! Give me back the woman, and you can take your good for nothing friendship and go. [EXIT L.

TED. The boy doesn't mean it. He's blind with passion. (*Walks up and down*) It can't be all for nothing. The boy *must* see it. Good Lord, does that woman really—care? (*Sinks on couch.*) I—I can't marry her. Honor, honor. (*Fiercely*) What *is* honor? Doris? Good Lord, may it be only acting. (*He sits with his head in his hands*)

(MRS. BRONSON *appears at* C. D. *Smiles comprehensively. Then she changes to a sympathetic expression. Advances softly.*)

MRS. BRONSON (*softly*). Ted, what is the matter?

TED (*starts*). Don't feel just right. That's all.

MRS. BRONSON. Is there anything I can do? Or would you rather just have me go away? I'm so sorry.

TED. Don't trouble about me. I'm not worth it.

MRS. BRONSON (*slowly*). Worth it? Do you know, do you know, what that means to *me?*

TED (*earnestly*). Tell me.

MRS. BRONSON (*looking straight ahead of her, and evidently speaking with effort*). It means you are the first honorable man I have ever known—the first man who has made me ashamed of what I am. My life has not been what it should have been—the aim in it has not been very high—I—I never had a mother to guide me—to advise me—but I have been most to blame. Then—I met Tom, I liked him—but (*quickly*) I was going to marry him for his money. This is the whole story, and then—*you* came and I knew the difference. I struggled against it—but you won me in spite of myself. You will hate and despise me—but, oh, Ted, after what you said last night—I had to tell you everything.

TED (*sternly*). Are you telling me the truth?

MRS. BRONSON. Yes, the truth. If it's going to turn you from me—I—I am still glad I told you—but—it would kill me. Ted, speak to me. You, do not doubt my word.

TED (*slowly*). No, Helen, I believe you. This means that we —that you—Helen, you will marry me, you will be my wife? (MRS. BRONSON *turns away. For a moment, a look of triumph goes over her face. Then she turns and speaks very softly.*)

MRS. BRONSON. Whenever you wish, Ted.

ENTER DORIS, C. D.

DORIS. Oh, pardon me, I didn't know anyone was here.

MRS. BRONSON. Tell her, Ted. I can't. [EXIT, L.

DORIS (*stiffly*). I hope you will pardon my intrusion, Mr. Prescott.

TED. Miss Doris, I beg of you—Miss Doris, (*slowly*) Mrs. Bronson has consented to be my wife.

(DORIS *starts slightly, then turns, and holds out her hand.*)

DORIS (*with effort*). I—I'm sure I congratulate you and—wish you all happiness.

(TED *bows his head slowly over her hand—and then quickly kisses it.*)

TED (*brokenly*). Good-bye—Doris. [EXIT, C. D., *hastily.*

(DORIS *stands irresolute a moment and then flings herself on the couch, her head on her arm, weeping violently.*

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Three years later. Drawing-room in the* RAYMONDS' *town residence, elegantly furnished. Entrances at* R., L., *and at centre of flat. Window* L. *of* C. D. *Sofa down* L. C. *Tea-table at* R. C. DISCOVERED, GRACE, *seated near rear of tea-table;* MRS. PUEBLO *on sofa, making an afternoon call;* DORIS *in front of table pouring tea.*

GRACE (*laughing*). Dear Doris, you say things just the same way you used to.

DORIS. Don't tell me I say the same things. Do give me credit for a little improvement. I'm three years older now, you know—and very worldly-wise——

GRACE. It doesn't seem three years since that memorable house-party, does it?

MRS. PUEBLO. I can't realize that it was so long ago. You haven't been South since, have you?

GRACE. No, I've been prancing about over the water. Dear me, how time flies——

MRS. PUEBLO. Which reminds me I've only seven more engagements this afternoon. (*Rises.*)

DORIS. Oh, I'm sorry you must go. It's been so long since I've really seen you.

MRS. PUEBLO. You're such a recluse, Doris. Not one of my receptions have you been to, and such charming men as I have imported for the occasions. You *must* come to my next. Good-bye, Miss Huston, I'm so glad to have seen you again. Good-bye, Doris. [EXIT, C. D.

GRACE. Now we can have a little gossip—Thank you, I will have some more tea. Oh, I'd forgotten. (*Unfastens charm from watch*) I picked this up for you in Paris.

DORIS. How dear of you to think of me in the delights of Paris.

GRACE. Paris was a whirl. And my poor art—I lost it completely—it cured me. Society now for me, thanks.

DORIS. How long were you in Paris?

GRACE. Nine months, my dear, it seemed like a day—we stayed mostly at the Continental. Oh, I had almost forgotten to tell you. Who do you suppose was staying there?

(DORIS *starts slightly.*)

GRACE (*rattling on*). Mr. Prescott and that scandalous wife of his—My dear, the talk about her! She certainly led him a life. I never could understand how he came to marry her, could you?

ENTER DINAH, C. D., *takes teapot and* EXIT.

DORIS (*confused*). It—it *was*—rather odd. (*Trying to change the subject*) Did you meet the Jamesons over there?

GRACE. Just my luck—not to. But let me tell you about Mr. Prescott. I never have seen a man so changed. He used to be so jolly and everything, and he's grown so quiet and tragic-looking. I should think he would with that dreadful woman.

(DORIS *fusses with the tea-things then glances out of the window.*)

DORIS. Here comes Daisy. How fortunate.

GRACE. She lives in town now, doesn't she? To think of her and Tom, engaged!

DORIS. We are all very much pleased——

ENTER DAISY, C. D.

DORIS. Here's a friend of yours, Daisy. (*Shakes hands with her*)

DAISY. Why, Grace Huston, how do you do?

GRACE. So glad to see you. How are you?

DAISY. Same old girl. (*Leans over the back of* DORIS'S *chair and kisses her*) How is your brother? Is he down here too?

GRACE. Yes, he expects to come over this afternoon. I couldn't wait for him, but just ran over for a moment myself.

ENTER DINAH *with fresh tea, and* EXIT C. D.

DAISY. It certainly is good to see old friends.

DORIS. Have some tea now. (*Takes some to* DAISY)

DAISY. Speaking of friends—have you heard the latest definition? A friend is someone who knows all about you and still likes you. How does that strike you?

GRACE. According to that, there are not many friends in the world.

DORIS. Which is very true. A rather good definition, I think.

DAISY. Now, Doris, don't get cynical. When Doris gets started that way—I have to take her in hand, (*playfully*) gently but firmly.

GRACE. Doris, cynical! Dear me, you must have changed. But I must trot. Hundreds of things to do as usual. (*Rises and buttons coat*)

DORIS. Don't you ever stop rushing?

GRACE. No, indeed. I haven't a doubt but I shall die of heart failure—Wasn't it sudden with Mr. Prescott's wife?

DAISY. Mr. Prescott's wife?

GRACE. Why, yes, hadn't you heard about it? She died nearly a year ago—heart failure. It near scared me to death. But dear me, what can one do? I shall rush to the end of time. Good-bye, Daisy. Good-bye, Doris. So glad to have seen you, dear.

[EXIT, C. D.

DAISY. So Mrs. Bronson, I mean, Mrs. Prescott—is dead! Ha, I wonder how Ted Prescott feels about it. How infatuated Tom was! But I've never been really jealous about it, because—well, that wasn't love, was it?

DORIS (*busy with the tea-things*). No, dear, don't worry.

DAISY. Do you remember how you used to rave about Ted Prescott's nobility and all that? Well, I don't suppose I ought to say anything mean since he certainly prevented Mrs. Bronson's getting Tom—lucky for Tom.

DORIS. Give me your hat, Daisy—Why haven't you taken it off?

DAISY (*taking out her hatpins*). Sometimes mean things like that, turn out best for the people they're intended to hurt. Don't you think so?

DORIS (*straightening some books on a table*). Sometimes.

DAISY. I wonder if he and Tom will ever make it up. If a person ever did a thing like that to me, I'd be *so* angry, I—I'd hiss and run up the wall.

DORIS (*trying to be light*). Oh, Daisy, nothing so dreadful!

DAISY. Yes, just that.

ENTER TOM, C. D., *singing*.

TOM. Hello, there! Why wasn't I informed that you were here? Doris will excuse us. (*He turns* DAISY *around and kisses her*)

DAISY. Silly boy!

DORIS. Don't mind me, dear children. I'm blind and deaf. Besides I'm going up-stairs.

DAISY. If you go one step, I'll——

DORIS (*teasingly*). "Kiss and run up the wall." [EXIT, C. D.

TOM (*suddenly*). Daisy, why doesn't Doris get engaged. There're plenty of suitors hanging around. There's old Jack

Fenton been adoring these three years. Now, if she only knew how nice it was. (*Puts his arm around her*)

DAISY. Tom, I should think you were a Freshman in college, instead of being supposed to have *some* sense.

TOM. Now, Daisy, when a fellow's a hard-working laborer, he might be allowed a little foolishness.

DAISY (*piqued*). Foolishness! Oh, very well, Mr. Raymond.

TOM. What in thunder can I say? If I say——

DAISY (*teasingly puts her hand over his mouth*). There—dear, you may say anything.

TOM. Oh, very well then. There's a certain girl whose eyes the loveliest——

DAISY. In reason. Mr. Raymond. Do be sensible, Tom. Do you know what I heard this afternoon? (*Watches him*) Mrs. Bronson, Ted Prescott's wife, died nearly a year ago.

TOM. Yes, I heard it this afternoon. One bad woman out of the world.

DAISY. I—I thought you used to——

TOM. Yes, I did use to—pretty hard. I was easy all right. Why can't such women leave boys alone.

DAISY. Well, she got Ted Prescott and he was no boy.

TOM. Let's not talk about Ted. He got all he deserved—and more. But you know, Daisy, since I've grown older and heard more about Mrs. Bronson, sometimes I've had an awful feeling that maybe I misjudged him after all. Good Lord, if I did!

DAISY. I don't exactly see how you could misjudge him. Oh, here's Papa Raymond, that is to be.

ENTER MR. RAYMOND, C. D.

MR. RAYMOND. Well, Daisy, what are you doing with my boy?

DAISY. He's perfectly safe with me I guarantee.

MR. RAYMOND. Well, he looks precious like going to a nice little funeral. (*Goes to* R. *and calls*) Doris, come and give me tea. (*To* DAISY) Can't get along without my tea.

ENTER DORIS, R.

DORIS. Sorry to have kept you waiting, Papa. (*Pours him tea*)

MR. RAYMOND. Just a little cup—that's it. I'm in a big rush. Take my advice, Daisy, always give men tea in the afternoon to keep 'em sweet tempered.

DAISY. And give them muffins for breakfast, and coffee in the middle of the morning, and a lovely luncheon and a big dinner and after-dinner coffee—Oh. Yes. I know all about managing sweet-tempered masculines.

MR. RAYMOND. I'm afraid to have you come in the family.

Now, Doris (*affectionately pulling her ear*) never says such things.

DAISY. No, hers are much, much worse.

(DORIS *laughs quietly.*)

MR. RAYMOND. By the way, Tom, I met an old friend of yours down town. Ted Prescott.

TOM (*startled*). Ted Prescott!

(DORIS *starts, then bends over the tea-table.*)

MR. RAYMOND. Why, yes. (*Drinking tea, he doesn't notice the effect on* TOM) Wife's dead and he comes back. He's going into politics again full force. Of course I asked him to stay with us while he's in town. Another little cup, please. (DORIS *can scarcely take the cup*)

TOM. You asked him to stay here!

MR. RAYMOND. Why, of course. However, he said he couldn't —only in town for a short time. He'll be up to pay his respects this afternoon. Be sure to be in, some of you.

ENTER MRS. RAYMOND, C. D.

MRS. RAYMOND. Father, the carriage is waiting for you.

MR. RAYMOND. No rest for the righteous. Good-bye, all of you. Don't forget to be at home—Doris—or some of you.

[EXIT, C. D.

(MRS. RAYMOND *talks to* DORIS *aside.* TOM *and* DAISY *are at front*, R.)

DAISY (*softly*). Are you quite sure you are not the tiniest bit sorry about Mrs. Bronson?

(TOM *looks back hastily and sees the others are occupied. He kisses her*). [EXIT BOTH, R.

MRS. RAYMOND (*looking anxiously at* DORIS). Doris dear, I'm afraid my little girl isn't happy.

DORIS (*rises and walks across the room*). It's just nerves, I guess. (*Trying to be light*) I'm getting so old, dear.

MRS. RAYMOND. Sometimes I almost think you haven't gotten over your childish hero-worship. Doris, you must not expect men to come up to ideals—if you wait for that, dear, I'm afraid you'll never be happy.

DORIS. Don't you think I can ever be happy without marrying somebody?

MRS. RAYMOND. It's the perfect happiness—it is the crown of womanhood, and I don't want my little girl to miss it. Are you trying to decide about Jack Fenton, dear?

DORIS (*putting her arms around her*). Mother dear, what a match-maker you are.

ENTER SAMBO C. D.; *announces*

Mass Fenton, Miss Doris.

MRS. RAYMOND (*hastily*). There, dear, smooth your hair—Ask him to stay for dinner—if you want to. [EXIT, R.

ENTER JACK, C. D. *With a roll of manuscript under his left arm. He has a bunch of red roses in his right hand, which he gives to* DORIS.

JACK. To actually find you alone. Here's luck.

DORIS. Aren't they lovely? Thank you so much, Jack. (*Arranges them in a vase,* JACK *watches her*)

JACK. Doris, pay attention to me—I'll only bother you a few minutes. Then I'm going up to work in Tom's library.

DORIS. Jack, I'm sure I always pay you the most respectful attention. (*She still arranges the flowers.* JACK *gets up, walks over and stands beside her*)

JACK. Red roses! Sign of true love. I—want you to wear one to-night—if there's any hope for me?

DORIS. Jack, please don't.

JACK (*excitedly*). Don't answer me *now.* I'll wait—please just think about it. You know how I——

DORIS (*hastily*). Jack, don't.

JACK. I know, you'll say, no; now—don't—just—here. (*Takes a rose from the vase and gives it to* DORIS, *who takes it mechanically*) Just wear it to-night—Doris—if there's any hope for me. (*Chokes. Picks up manuscripts he brought in with him*)

[EXIT, C. D.

(DORIS *mechanically plays with the rose.*)

DORIS. Dear old Jack. (*Smiles sadly. A pause*) Ted Prescott's in town—coming here! Why can't I forget him? (*Her face hardens*) [EXIT, R.

ENTER PERCY HUSTON, C. D., *gazes around with his eyeglass.*

PERCY. Aw, I say, where is everybody? Here I blow in—blow around—where the deuce are they? (*Looks around*)

ENTER DAISY, R.

DAISY. Why, how do you do?

PERCY (*aside*). Well, I'll be blowed. Somebody at last. (*To*

DAISY) Charmed, I'm sure. Are you living here now, Miss Daisy.

DAISY. Not yet.

PERCY. But expect to. Congratulations. I heard about it, don't cher know. Do you think Tom would really dare trust you alone with me?

DAISY (*amused*). I'm afraid he might be worried.

PERCY. I have rather a bad name among the ladies.

ENTER JACK, L., *goes to* DAISY *without seeing* PERCY.

JACK. Say, Daisy, I want your help. Can I have a private conversation for about—(*Sees* PERCY)

PERCY. Charmed, old man. (*Shakes hands with him*)

JACK. Why, hello there! (*Not especially pleased*)

PERCY. Well, this is delightful. For a time I thought I shouldn't find anyone. I was weally getting quite wowwied.

JACK. Have you seen the family?

PERCY. No, don't cher know. But then, I can talk to you just as well.

(JACK *glances despairingly at* DAISY.)

DAISY (*glancing teasingly at* JACK). Do tell us *all* about your adventures all these years. You must have a string of hearts in your possession.

PERCY. Aw, now, Miss Daisy, I believe you're jollyin' me. Well, how is all this nice little bunch? Deah old Tom, how is he?

JACK. Pretty fine—if you hurry, you can catch him at his office—he's generally there about this time.

PERCY. Deah me, no, I can't hurry, don't cher know. See him some other time. Well, who else is there? Aw—yes—Prescott—the grand one—how's he?

DAISY. We haven't seen him in a long time.

PERCY. Do you know, I used to think sometimes that he and Tom had a wow about that Mrs. Bronson. I used to weally think they did.

JACK. Say, Percy, my boy, I'd be careful about how much thinking I did if I were you.

PERCY. Aw, now, I say—but as I was sayin'——

JACK. There, isn't that Doris out in the garden now? You'd better hurry before she goes out.

DAISY (*looking out of the window*). Why, Jack!

(JACK *quickly motions her to be silent.*)

PERCY. Why, I don't care about——

JACK. There, she's starting, hurry up or she'll be gone.

PERCY. Weally, won't you people mind if I go?

JACK. Not a bit. Hurry before she goes.
PERCY. I fly! [EXIT, R.

(DAISY *drops in a chair laughing.*)

JACK. Forgive me the fib. But Doris *may* be in the garden somewhere. Come in the library, Daisy, there's a good girl. I want your advice.
DAISY. I should think you had better get out of Percy's way before he comes back. [EXIT BOTH, L., *laughing.*

ENTER SAMBO, L., *speaks off.*

SAMBO. Come right in, Mass Prescott. I'll tell Miss Doris, directly, sah.

ENTER TED, L., *looks older.*
[EXIT SAMBO, L.

TED (*picks up a picture of* DORIS *on the table, opens the back of his watch and compares them, his face lighting up*). She's waited for me. She has understood.

ENTER DORIS, C. D. *Pauses a moment as though to pull herself together. Then advances.*

DORIS. This is indeed unexpected, Mr. Prescott.

(TED *takes her hand and keeps it, looking hard at her*).

TED. Doris—I've come back to you—at last.
DORIS (*pulls her hand away*). Mr. Prescott, I don't understand you.
TED. Don't understand? Doris, you *do* understand. You know that I—love you, Doris—have always loved you.
DORIS. Mr. Prescott, how dare you speak to me like that? I am not a child, now—I am a woman—and my belief in heroes is—dead.
TED (*staring at her*). Doris. (*Simply*) I thought you loved me.
DORIS (*intensely*). You expect me to care for a man who did what you did to my brother—a man who broke all the ties of friendship as you did?
TED (*slowly*). And you too did not understand?
DORIS. Understand? Yes, I understand that you were not the man I thought you. You broke to pieces all my girlish ideals and enthusiasm—and—love—and as for the woman——
TED (*slowly*). You are speaking of the woman that was my wife.
DORIS. I—beg your pardon.

(*Goes slowly to* L. *evidently struggling to appear composed. She still holds the rose in her hand. She pauses a moment at the door and then goes out without looking back.*)

TED (*stands perfectly still*). And she, too, never understood! (*Sinks on a chair, his head in his hands*)

ENTER PERCY *and* JACK, C. D.

PERCY. Aw, I say, why, it's Ted Prescott, our old rival celebrity.

JACK. Ted! You here. (*They clasp hands, both a little stunned*)

PERCY. Now, I declare this is right jolly. Let's have another house-party.

TED. Well, Jack, I'm glad to see you.

PERCY. I nevah was so glad to see anyone, deah boy.

JACK (*impatiently*). Say, Percy, you'd better look around and find someone—Tom!

PERCY. Aw, now, I say, I've looked all over that confounded garden. I don't weally believe she's there at all.

TED. Well, how has the world been treating you, Jack?

PERCY. Looks frightfully well, don't cher know—I say, fellars, have some of me latest cigarettes—little birds. This cigarette smoke has a deuced effect on the girls. You as much of a lady-killer as ever, Prescott?

JACK. Say, Percy, get out if you're going to smoke that cigarette.

PERCY. Do they weally object? Deah me, I won't smoke it!

JACK (*desperately*). Say, I forgot to tell you. Your sister said to meet her at Mrs. Lant's at four. (*Takes out watch*) You've got only five minutes.

PERCY. Aw, I say—Just as I was goin' to have such a comfortable chat with you boys. Sisters are such a confounded bore.

JACK (*eye on watch*). Only four minutes.

PERCY. Deah me, you fellars won't weally mind if I go? Good-bye. Tell the family I've spent the entire afternoon here but, deuce take me, if I could find them. [EXIT, C. D.

JACK. Second fib in a good cause. (*Goes to* TED *and lays his hand on his shoulder*) Goodness, Ted, but I'm glad to see you—alive.

TED. I'm mighty glad to get back—(*aside*) at least, I was——

JACK. I hear you're—released. How have you lived through these three years?

TED. Let's not discuss it, Jack, I found I had been duped like the rest. I had to take my medicine, and now—now——

JACK. Do you mean to tell me Tom doesn't know yet? Doesn't the idiot know the best friend he's got in the world? By thunder, I'll tell him——

TED. See here, Jack, none of——

ENTER TOM, L. *Sees* TED *and stops.*

JACK. Tom Raymond, come here and shake hands with the best friend on earth you've got.

(TOM *starts towards him—then stops.* DORIS *appears at* C. D. *She stands transfixed, the others do not see her.*)

JACK. I'll tell you the whole story. The day Ted got to your house-party—three years ago—I told him the whole story of Mrs. Bronson's affair with you. We planned his campaign as the only way to get you out of her clutches. He did it for *you*—the whole mean, dirty business—and I tell you, Tom Raymond, there are few men in these United States would have done it.

TOM. Ted! (*Starts toward him.*)

JACK. Wait a minute. I'm not through—and then—you know the way she fooled him—fooled everyone. Made him think she loved him—got his sense of honor up and he married her—married her, do you hear, because he thought he ought to. And he has lived in—hell since.

(DORIS *gives a little sob and* EXIT *hastily.*)

(TOM *goes to* TED *and wrings both his hands.* JACK *turns quickly,* EXIT, R.)

TOM. Old man—(*Chokes.*)

TED. That's all right—don't say anything.

(DAISY'S *voice is heard.* TOM *puts his arm around* TED'S *shoulders.*) [EXIT BOTH, L.

ENTER DAISY *and* DORIS, R.)

DAISY. Why, Doris dear, what on earth——

(DORIS, *looks around. Sees no one, then her face lights and she throws her arms around* DAISY. *She still has the rose.*)

DORIS. To think—to think. (*Buries her head on* DAISY'S *shoulders*)

DAISY. What on earth is the matter—you were crying so hard a minute ago—and—now your eyes are so bright.

DORIS (*stands gazing off, absolutely forgetting* DAISY). Oh, what I said——

DAISY. Doris, I insist on knowing—you must be ill.

DORIS (*starts*). Ted's coming. Oh, Daisy, please go. (*Rushing over to* L.) Quickly, quickly.

DAISY (*with a smile of comprehension*). You don't mean it? Oh, Doris, I'm so glad. (*Kisses her rapturously*) [EXIT, L.

ENTER TED, R.

TED. Oh, pardon me.

DORIS. Mr. Prescott, Ted—I—I—overheard what Jack said—I—I—Oh, what can I say?

TED. Doris, you mean?

DORIS. I—I mean I understand—that—I—'ve cared all the time—only—Oh, can't you help me?

(*She drops the rose to the floor as* TED *comes toward her. He takes her passionately in his arms.*)

TED. Doris, you love me?

DORIS. Yes—my hero——

ENTER TOM *and* DAISY, L.

TOM. Ah! At last you have your reward. Yes—a hero indeed! The soul of honor—a friend to the death.

TED. Dear Tom,—after it all, I am happy. Yes, happy in my love—happy in regaining a broken friendship—happy in having been instrumental in saving a friend from—from himself.

TOM (*quickly*). And a WIDOW'S WILES.

TABLEAU.

TOM *and* TED *at* C., *right hands clasped.*
DORIS *and* DAISY *in close embrace at* R. C.

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